



TOWN HALL
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DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
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July 11, 2016

DRB MEMORANDUM

Memo to: Rob Morra, Building Commissioner
David Ziomek, Asst. Town Manager
Christine Brestrup, Planning Director
Jennifer Gannett, Permit Administrator
Ruth Taylor, Administrative Assistant
From: Jonathan Tucker, Senior Planner
Subject: DRB Meeting – July 7, 2016

The Thursday, July 7, 2016 meeting of the Design Review Board began at 7:03 p.m. in the First Floor Meeting Room, Amherst Town Hall.

Design Review Board members Jan Marquardt, Catherine Porter, Michael Birtwistle, and Jonathan Salvon were present.

Staff present included Senior Planner Jonathan Tucker.

Applicants present included Adam Lussier (Zanna), Zachary Swan (Northeast Solar), and Hamid Kaboli, (TOP Kabab).

Applications

DRB 2016-00023, Zanna – 87 North Pleasant Street – New awning.

Recommend approval as proposed.

Mr. Lussier presented photographs of the existing awning and proposed new awning, which basically entailed changing the fabric from green to grey on the existing awning frame. A fabric swatch was examined, and it was noted that the fabric material was also the same weight and texture as the existing fabric, just grey instead of green. Lettering on the new awning will be identical to that on the existing awning.

Ms. Marquardt moved approval of the design as proposed. Mr. Birtwistle seconded, and the motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Ms. Salvon recused himself and stepped down, citing a conflict of interest with the next application, which his architectural firm had worked on. Mr. Birtwistle disclosed that he was on the board of trustees for the non-profit Amherst Cinema, but felt that he could act impartially on the application.

DRB2016-00024, Amherst Cinema – 28 Amity Street South East Street – Roof-mounted solar PV array.

Recommend approval as proposed.

Mr. Swan presented plans, photographs of the site, existing conditions, and specifications of the proposed solar panels, which were mounted at a very low angle. He indicated that there would be about 111 panels.

Mr. Birtwistle asked if the panels would be visible from any public vantage. Ms. Swan said that they were almost laid flat and would be difficult to see from anywhere. Mr. Tucker said that the top edges might be visible from the west side of South Prospect Street, or from the third floor of the Merchants Row buildings immediately to the east. Ms. Porter said that she did not think that having them be partially visible was a problem. They were not unattractive, it was something the Town wanted to encourage, and having them partly visible would accomplish that.

Mr. Tucker asked if there was other equipment associated with the solar array that would be visible on the building or the site. Mr. Swan said that there would be some 1 inch conduit leading from the array down the east side of the building, and a shut-off box enabling fire personnel to turn off the power in the event of an emergency. He said that renderings of this equipment would be submitted.

Ms. Marquardt asked if the low angle of the panels would affect their function during snow events. Did they need to be kept free of snow? Mr. Swan said that the bulk of energy generated was anticipated to occur during the 10 month period when there was little snow. Also, the PV panels are black. They absorb heat from the sun and once they start generating energy they heat up from that, as well, and snow would be melted.

He said installation, once begun, would take about 2 weeks. In response to a question from Mr. Tucker, he said that there were no new 'project' signs associated with the array.

After further discussion, Ms. Marquardt moved approval of the design as proposed. Mr. Birtwistle seconded, and the motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Mr. Salvon rejoined the Board.

DRB-2016-00025, 31 Boltwood Walk – New signs for new restaurant.

Recommend approval as proposed.

Mr. Kaboli presented elevations and photo-shopped renderings of proposed new signs for the new kabab restaurant.

Ms. Porter asked if the brick color shown in the renderings was a real red, or more orange. Mr. Kaboli said it would be a bright red. The locations of the signs were reviewed. One was a vinyl decal on the window and the other was a circular aluminum panel affixed to the stucco exterior of the building. Both were lit with existing exterior lighting

After further discussion, Mr. Salvon moved approval of the sign design as proposed. Ms. Marquardt seconded, and the motion passed unanimously (4-0) to recommend the design of the expansion to the dormer, as proposed.

There was discussion of the need for new membership.

The Board set its next meeting for Monday, July 25.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.